

In the Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended). A suture retainer for securing a suture relative to a body tissue, comprising:

a first section including a first surface and further including an extension member extending from said surface, and

a second section including a second surface, said second surface opposing said first surface and being configured for receiving the extension member, the first and second sections being bondable together with the application of an energy source;

said first surface being configured to abut the suture and said second surface being configured to abut the suture.

Claim 2 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture is interposed between the first and second sections.

Claim 3 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 2, wherein the first and second sections are bonded together to secure the suture.

Claim 4 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the first section includes a pair of parallel channels.

Claim 5 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 4, wherein the extension member is interposed between the pair of parallel channels.

Claim 6 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 5, wherein the second section includes a channel configured for receiving the extension member.

Claim 7 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 6, wherein the suture includes first and second ends one each positionable within the parallel channels.

Claim 8 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 7, wherein the extension member is positioned within the channel, such that the suture is interposed between the first and second sections.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the first section comprises a pair of parallel extension members.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 9, wherein the second section includes a pair of parallel channels configured for receiving the parallel extension members.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 10, wherein the suture is interposed between the parallel extension members.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 11 wherein the parallel extension members are positioned within the parallel channels, such that the suture is interposed between the first and second sections.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the extension member is a center post.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 13, wherein the second section includes a flange defining a passage configured for receiving the center post.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 14, wherein an exterior surface of the center post and an interior surface of the passage are textured.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 15, wherein the suture is wrapped around the center post.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn). The suture retainer according to claim 16, wherein the center post is positioned within the passage, such that the suture is interposed between the center post and the an interior surface of the passage.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of at least one of the first and second ~~section are~~ sections contacting the other of the first and second sections is textured.

Claim 19 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the first and second sections are interconnected.

Claim 20 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer is made of a biodegradable material.

Claim 21 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer is made of a heat shrink material.

Claim 22 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer includes viable cells.

Claim 23 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer includes pharmaceutical agents.

Claim 24 (Original). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the energy source is selected from the group consisting of radio frequency energy, laser energy, microwave energy, ultrasound energy, contact heating energy, and combinations thereof.

Claims 25-48 (Canceled).

Claim 49 (New). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein said first surface and said second surface are configured to sandwich the suture.

Claim 50 (New). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein:

said first section has two channels formed therein, said channels being disposed opposingly about and immediately adjacent to said extension member; and

said second section is configured to seat within said channels of said first section.

Claim 51 (New). The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein:

said extension member divides said first surface into a first first-surface subsurface and a second first-surface subsurface,

a channel divides said second surface into a first second-surface subsurface and a second second-surface subsurface,

said first first-surface subsurface is configured to align with said first second-surface subsurface when said first section is bonded to said second section; and

said second first-surface subsurface is configured to align with said second second-surface subsurface when said first section is bonded to said second section.

Claim 52 (New). The suture retainer according to claim 51, further comprising a suture being disposed between at least one of said first first-surface subspace and said first second-surface subspace and said second first-surface subspace and said second second-surface subspace.